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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 003199

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CABINET SHUFFLES AND THE LONG SQUEEZE: PM ERDOGAN  
SETS HIS SIGHTS ON FONMIN GUL

(U) Classified by Polcounselor John Kunstadter; reasons: E.O. 12958 1.4 (b,d).

1. (C) Summary: Long rumored to be considering a cabinet re-shuffle, PM Erdogan has made his first move suddenly and in limited fashion. However
2. (C) In a trademark sudden move, PM Erdogan announced the replacement of three ministers in a mini-Cabinet shuffle June 4. Cabinet changes include
3. (C) Now Erdogan appears to have overcome his indecision, spurred in part by what Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler told a close contact of our
4. (U) Erdogan appointed as Minister of Agriculture Mehmet Mehdi 1), a Diyarbakir MP from a prominent local family with high status in the AKP
5. (C) An AKP xxxxx and two other long-term Embassy contacts with deep relations in AKP describe Eker as a decent but passive man, close to Erdogan
6. (U) The new Minister of Public Works is Trabzon MP Faruk Nafiz 2) (umlaut over the O). Born Trabzon 1946. Civil engineering degree from Karadeniz
7. (C) A fellow Trabzon contractor and Trabzonspor board member describes Ozak as coming from the Sufi (mystical) line of the Milli Gorus Islam
8. (U) Istanbul Second District MP Nimet 3) is the new State Minister for Women's Affairs. Born Ayranici (Ankara) 1965. Grew up in relatively wealthy
9. (C) Cubukcu is focused, highly ambitious, and months ago made clear to us she sought the state minister position. She has ensured that she
10. (C) With the dismissal of Guclu and these appointments Erdogan has shown more clearly that he intends to whittle down Gul's influence. By
11. (C) Contacts such as Prime Ministry advisor xxxxx who has provided a wealth of accurate insights into AKP, foresee a high possibility that
12. (C) Erdogan may also be aiming over time to remove Gul's close associate State Minister Atalay and Minister of Justice and government spokesman